

Merle Antony Tuve Papers
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Washington, D.C.
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Revised and expanded by T. Michael Womack (1996 Addition)
Revised and expanded by Colleen Benoit Kim (2019 Addition)

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Collection Summary

Title: Merle Antony Tuve Papers

Span Dates: 1901-1982

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1941-1966)

ID No.: MSS43448

Creator: Tuve, Merle Antony, 1901-1982

Extent: 152,000 items

Extent: 434 containers plus 1 classified

Extent: 174 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm74043448>

Summary: Physicist. Correspondence, memoranda, speeches, articles, reports, laboratory and personal notebooks, notes, personnel records, printed material, blueprints, diagrams, photographs, and other papers relating to Tuve's administration of government-sponsored scientific projects such as the development of the proximity fuze for the United States Navy during World War II.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Baldwin, Ralph Belknap, 1912- Deadly fuze : the secret weapon of World War II. 1980.

Bush, Vannevar, 1890-1974--Correspondence.

Fleming, J. A. (John Ambrose), Sir, 1849-1945--Correspondence.

Hafstad, Lawrence, 1904- --Correspondence.

Lundsager, Soren. Velocity structures in hydrogen profiles; a sky atlas of neutral hydrogen emission. 1973.

Merriam, John C. (John Campbell), 1869-1945--Correspondence.

Tatel, Howard E. (Howard Edwin), 1913- --Correspondence.

Tuve, Merle Antony, 1901-1982.

Tuve, Merle Antony, 1901-1982. Velocity structures in hydrogen profiles; a sky atlas of neutral hydrogen emission. 1973.

Van de Graaff, Robert Jemison, 1901-1967--Correspondence.

Van Doren, Carl, 1885-1950--Correspondence.

Weatherwax, James Lloyd, 1884- --Correspondence.

Whitman, Winifred Gray. Winifred Gray Whitman research notebooks. 1930-1931.

Organizations

Carnegie Institution of Washington. Department of Terrestrial Magnetism.

Committee on Scientific and Technical Communication (U.S.)

Johns Hopkins University. Applied Physics Laboratory.

Latin America Science Board (U.S.)

National Academy of Sciences (U.S.)

National Radio Astronomy Observatory (U.S.)

Ronne Antarctic Research Expedition (1946-1948)

Washington Conference on Theoretical Physics (5th : 1939 : Washington, D.C.)

Washington Conference on Theoretical Physics (6th : 1940 : Washington, D.C.)

Subjects

Astronomy.

Cosmic rays.

Defense industries.

Geomagnetism.

Geophysics--International cooperation.

High voltages.
International Geophysical Year, 1957-1958.
Military weapons--Technological innovations.
Nuclear physics.
Physics--Washington (D.C.)--Congresses.
Physics.
Proximity fuzes.
Radiation.
Science--Societies, etc.
Seismology.
Telescopes.
Upper atmosphere.
Van de Graaff generator.
World War, 1939-1945--Science.

Places

Tuve, Mount (Antarctica)

Occupations

Physicists.

Provenance

The papers of Merle Antony Tuve, experimental physicist and developer of the proximity fuze during World War II, were donated to the Library of Congress by Tuve in 1972. A small addition was given by Winifred Gray Whitman, wife of the donor, in 1982. A second small addition was donated by the Carnegie Institute of Washington in 2006.

Processing History

The papers of Merle Antony Tuve were arranged and described in 1974. Additional material received in 1982 was incorporated into the collection in 1996. Material received in 2006 was incorporated into the collection in 2019.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Merle Antony Tuve in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Merle Antony Tuve are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Security Classified Documents

Government regulations control the use of classified material in this collection. Manuscript Division staff can furnish information concerning access to and use of classified items.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Merle Antony Tuve Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1901, June 27	Born, Canton, South Dakota
1922	B.S., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.
1922-1923	Teaching fellow, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.
1923-1924	Instructor in physics, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
1924-1926	Instructor in physics, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.
1926	Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.
1926-1946	Member, Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution, Washington, D.C.
1927	Married Winifred Gray Whitman
1940-1945	Director, Section T, Office of Scientific Research and Development
1945-1946	Director, Applied Physics Laboratory, Johns Hopkins University, Silver Spring, Md.
1946-1966	Director, Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution, Washington, D.C.
1966	Retired
1982, May 15	Died, Bethesda, Md.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Merle Antony Tuve (1901-1982) span the years 1901-1982, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period between 1941 and 1966. The collection focuses on Tuve's work as a physicist and is organized into the following series: [Family Correspondence](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Laboratory File](#), [Administrative File](#), [Subject File](#), [Speeches and Writings](#), [Miscellany](#), [Printed Matter](#), [Notebooks of Winifred Gray Whitman](#), [1996 Addition](#), [2019 Addition](#), and [Classified](#). Included in the papers are correspondence, memoranda, reports, laboratory and personal notebooks, diagrams, blueprints, personnel records, speeches, articles, notes, photographs, and near-print and printed matter.

Although some of Tuve's files are personal in nature, the greater number concern his administration of government-sponsored scientific projects such as the development of the proximity fuze for the United States Navy during World War II. Other files represented in the [Administrative Office](#) series reflect his directorship of the Applied Physics Laboratory of Johns Hopkins University, 1945-1946, and the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1946-1966. Subjects of note include the Radio Astronomy Project at Greenbank, West Virginia, seismics, cosmic-ray flares, magnetism, and the composition of the upper atmosphere. Material in the file relating to the Applied Physics Laboratory concerns the conversion of war industries to peacetime use. Other topics of interest are the International Geophysical Year, the National Academy of Sciences, and the Washington Conference on Theoretical Physics, 1939-1940.

A sizable portion of the files in the [Laboratory](#) and [Miscellany](#) series relate to Tuve's academic years, his early teaching career, and his experimental research projects before 1940 with the Carnegie Institution. Project reports, many in Tuve's handwriting, describe experiments with high voltage, the Van de Graaff magnetic field, and basic studies in nuclear physics. Of interest are Tuve's personal notebooks in the [Miscellany](#) series which reflect his thoughts on a wide range of topics. The collection also contains scientific notebooks belonging to Tuve's wife, Winifred Gray Whitman in the [Notebooks of Winifred Gray Whitman](#) series. On the medical staff of St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C., Whitman, who retained her maiden name, collaborated with Tuve from 1928 to 1932 in analyzing the effects of high frequency resonance radiation on animals. The notebooks, which record experiments relating to this subject, cover the period 1930-1931 and contain observations in Tuve's handwriting and notations by Whitman.

Prominent correspondents in the [General Correspondence](#) series includes: Vannevar Bush, Sir J. A. Fleming, Lawrence Hafstad, John C. Merriam, Howard E. Tatel, Robert Jemison Van de Graaff, Carl Van Doren, and James Lloyd Weatherwax.

The [1996 Addition](#) contains correspondence, writings, and miscellaneous material. For the most part, the correspondence in this addition consists of exchanges of letters between Tuve and professional colleagues and friends concerning physics, astronomy, terrestrial magnetism, and related topics during the period following his retirement until his death. There is a small amount of correspondence concerning family matters. Writings among the addition are divided into two sections, writings by Tuve and writings by others. Writings by Tuve include offprints of scientific papers, speeches, and eulogies. Of note is Tuve's 1973 publication *Velocity Structures in Hydrogen Profiles*, coauthored with Soren Lundsager. Writings

by others consist primarily of offprints written by colleagues as well as a copy of the doctoral dissertation by each of Tuve's children. Also included are drafts of *The Deadly Fuze: The Secret Weapon of World War II*, submitted to Tuve for commentary by the author, Ralph Belknap Baldwin. This work, published in 1980, chronicles the efforts of Tuve and other scientists in the field of weapons research. Miscellaneous material in the series includes awards, biographical material, obituaries, retirement material, and wills. Also represented are organizations such as the American Geophysical Union, the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, the Cosmos Club, the Applied Physics Laboratory of Johns Hopkins University, and the National Academy of Sciences, for which Tuve served as home secretary for many years. There are biographical files on Tuve's children as well as his father, sister, and brothers, and numerous photographs, including images of buildings, Tuve family members, award and dedication ceremonies, luncheons and receptions, demonstrations of electronic equipment, and group portraits of formal gatherings as well as single portraits of Tuve. The file on the Ronne Antarctic Research Expedition details the discovery and naming of Mt. Tuve on the southernmost continent.

The [2019 Addition](#) complements files found elsewhere in the collection and pertain chiefly to Tuve's professional endeavors as director of the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution during the period between 1964 and 1966. The series comprises correspondence, notes, technical sketches and photographs, reports, printed matter, and meeting minutes from a variety of boards and advisory committees on which Tuve served. Files related to Tuve's work on the National Academy of Sciences's and National Research Council's joint Latin America Science Board feature prominently, as do the National Academy of Sciences's and National Academy of Engineering's joint Committee on Scientific and Technical Communication. Material pertaining to studies into seismology and telescope image tubes are also well represented in this series.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in twelve series:

- [Family Correspondence, 1915-1953](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1912-1972](#)
- [Laboratory File, 1928-1940](#)
- [Administrative File, 1941-1969](#)
- [Subject File, circa 1920-1972](#)
- [Speeches and Writings, 1920s-1960s](#)
- [Miscellany, 1914-1960s](#)
- [Printed Matter, 1908-1960s](#)
- [Notebooks of Winifred Gray Whitman, 1930-1931](#)
- [1996 Addition, 1901-1982](#)
- [2019 Addition, 1952-1973](#)
- [Classified, 1941](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1	<p><u>Family Correspondence, 1915-1953</u></p> <p>Letters between Tuve and family members. Arranged alphabetically by name of family member.</p>
BOX 2-3	<p><u>General Correspondence, 1912-1972</u></p> <p>Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 4-25	<p><u>Laboratory File, 1928-1940</u></p> <p>Correspondence, reports, notes, diagrams, mimeographed material, personnel records, printed matter, and miscellaneous material concerning Tuve's work in the Terrestrial Magnetism Department of the Carnegie Institution. Arranged chronologically by year.</p>
BOX 26-255	<p><u>Administrative File, 1941-1969</u></p> <p>Correspondence, reports, notes, diagrams, blueprints, mimeographed material, personnel records, printed matter, and miscellaneous material comprising the director's office files for the Office of Scientific Research and Development, the Applied Physics Laboratory of Johns Hopkins University, and the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution. Each file is arranged by period.</p>
BOX 256-357	<p><u>Subject File, circa 1920-1972</u></p> <p>Mostly files related to Tuve's scientific interests beyond his direct duties as director of the Carnegie Institution's Department of Terrestrial Magnetism. Arranged alphabetically by subject.</p>
BOX 358-369	<p><u>Speeches and Writings, 1920s-1960s</u></p> <p>Typed and printed articles and speeches. Unarranged.</p>
BOX 370-403	<p><u>Miscellany, 1914-1960s</u></p> <p>Notebooks, student and teaching materials, correspondence, desk calendars, etc. Arranged by type of material.</p>
BOX 404-411	<p><u>Printed Matter, 1908-1960s</u></p>
BOX 411-413	<p><u>Notebooks of Winifred Gray Whitman, 1930-1931</u></p> <p>Research notebooks kept by Whitman, Tuve's wife, at Johns Hopkins University relating to radiation and cancer.</p>
BOX 414-420	<p><u>1996 Addition, 1901-1982</u></p> <p>Correspondence and writings by Tuve and others, arranged chronologically, and miscellaneous material, arranged alphabetically by name of individual, organization, topic, or type of material.</p>

BOX 421-434

2019 Addition, 1952-1973

Correspondence, notes, meeting minutes, reports, and printed matter created and/or collected by Tuve during his time as director of the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution.

Arranged alphabetically by topic or material type.

BOX CL 1

Classified, 1941

Report removed from the Office of Scientific Research and Development subseries within the Administrative File.

Organized and described according to the series, box, and folder from which the item was removed.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Family Correspondence, 1915-1953 Letters between Tuve and family members. Arranged alphabetically by name of family member.
BOX 1	Larsen, Charlotte (aunt), 1923 Larsen, Emily Carolyn (aunt), 1916-1924 Larsen, Lewis L. (uncle), 1922-1935 Tuve, Anthony G. (father), 1923 Tuve, George Lewis (brother), 1915-1932 Tuve, Ida Marie (mother), 1924-1936 Tuve, Richard Larsen (brother), 1924-1925 Tuve, Rosemond (sister), 1924-1925 Whitman, Mrs. (mother-in-law), 1929 Whitman, Winifred Gray (wife), 1934-1953
BOX 2-3	General Correspondence, 1912-1972 Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 2	1912-1926
BOX 3	1927-1972
BOX 4-25	Laboratory File, 1928-1940 Correspondence, reports, notes, diagrams, mimeographed material, personnel records, printed matter, and miscellaneous material concerning Tuve's work in the Terrestrial Magnetism Department of the Carnegie Institution. Arranged chronologically by year.
BOX 4	Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C. 1928-1931
BOX 5-7	1930s
BOX 8-11	1930-1932
BOX 12-16	1933-1936
BOX 17	1937-1939
BOX 18-22	1937-1940
BOX 23-25	1939 (cyclotron development)
BOX 26-255	Administrative File, 1941-1969 Correspondence, reports, notes, diagrams, blueprints, mimeographed material, personnel records, printed matter, and miscellaneous material comprising the director's office files for the Office of Scientific Research and Development, the Applied Physics Laboratory of Johns Hopkins University, and the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution. Each file is arranged by period.

Administrative File, 1941-1969

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BOX 26-28	Office of Scientific Research and Development 1941
BOX 29-44	1941-1942
BOX 45-62	1941-1943
BOX 63-64	1942
BOX 65-83	1942-1943 <i>See also Classified</i>
BOX 84-90	1942-1945
BOX 91-99	1943
BOX 100	1943 (blueprints)
BOX 101	1944-1945
BOX 102	1945
BOX 103-107	1942-1943 (blueprints and drawings)
BOX 108-112	1942-1943 (blueprints)
BOX 113-114	Applied Physics Laboratory, Johns Hopkins University, Silver Spring, Md. 1945
BOX 115-118	1945-1946
BOX 119	1946
BOX 120-124	Carnegie Institution of Washington, Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Washington, D.C. 1946-1947
BOX 125-127	1946-1947
BOX 128-134	1947-1948
BOX 135	1948
BOX 136-138	1949
BOX 139-142	1949-1950
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BOX 146-149	1950-1952
BOX 150-152	1951-1953
BOX 153-158	1952-1953
BOX 159-164	1953-1954
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BOX 188-192	1958-1961
BOX 193	1958-1962
BOX 194-199	1959-1960
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BOX 201-207	1961-1962
BOX 208	1961-1963 (magnetism)
BOX 209-214	1962-1963
BOX 215	1962-1964
BOX 216	1963 (magnetism)
BOX 217-222	1963-1964
BOX 223	1963-1965 (magnetism)
BOX 224-231	1963-1966 (seismic)

Administrative File, 1941-1969

Container	Contents
BOX 232	1964-1965
BOX 233-238	1965-1967
BOX 239-242	1966-1967
BOX 243	1966-1967 (Carnegie image tube)
BOX 244-245	1967 (Carnegie image tube)
BOX 246-251	1967-1968
BOX 252	1967-1969 (magnetism)
BOX 253-255	1968-1969
BOX 256-357	Subject File, circa 1920-1972 Mostly files related to Tuve's scientific interests beyond his direct duties as director of the Carnegie Institution's Department of Terrestrial Magnetism. Arranged alphabetically by subject.
BOX 256-258	Asian trip
BOX 259-263	Civil defense
BOX 264-267	Geophysical Research Board 1962
BOX 268-275	1965
BOX 276-279	1965-1967
BOX 280	Guided missiles
BOX 281-285	International Geophysical Year 1956-1957
BOX 286	1957-1959
BOX 287-289	1958-1960
BOX 290	Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md., Board of Trustees 1955-1956
BOX 291	1956-1957
BOX 292	National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C. 1948-1950
BOX 293	1957-1958
BOX 294-296	1963-1965
BOX 297-298	1967-1968
BOX 299-301	1968
BOX 302-303	1968-1969
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BOX 305-306	1969-1970
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BOX 308-310	1970-1972
BOX 311-315	National Research Council, Committee on Growth, Washington, D.C. 1946-1949
BOX 316-319	1947-1948
BOX 320-322	1948
BOX 323	1949
BOX 324-329	Radio astronomy
BOX 330-333	Seismic project
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Subject File, circa 1920-1972

Container	Contents
BOX 335	UNESCO 1946
BOX 336-340	1948-1949
BOX 341-342	1949
BOX 343	1949-1950
BOX 344-345	Miscellaneous subjects circa 1920-circa 1930
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BOX 357	1950-1953
BOX 358-369	Speeches and Writings, 1920s-1960s Typed and printed articles and speeches. Unarranged.
BOX 358-369	1920s-1960s
BOX 370-403	Miscellany, 1914-1960s Notebooks, student and teaching materials, correspondence, desk calendars, etc. Arranged by type of material.
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BOX 371	Blueprints, drawings
BOX 372-374	Desk calendars, 1940s-1960s
BOX 375	Clippings on music, 1923-1924
BOX 376	Computer materials Insurance papers Bills and receipts
BOX 377	Farm, 1950-1952 Desalination, 1960-1961 Howard Tatel, 1954
BOX 378-379	Greeting and Christmas cards
BOX 380-383	Ionospheric records, 1944-1945
BOX 384-386	Notebooks, 1940s-1960s
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BOX 402-403	Miscellaneous Miscellaneous correspondence
BOX 404-411	Printed Matter, 1908-1960s

Printed Matter, 1908-1960s

Container	Contents
BOX 404-411	1908-1960s
BOX 411-413	Notebooks of Winifred Gray Whitman, 1930-1931 Research notebooks kept by Whitman, Tuve's wife, at Johns Hopkins University relating to radiation and cancer.
BOX 411-413	1930-1931
BOX 414-420	1996 Addition, 1901-1982 Correspondence and writings by Tuve and others, arranged chronologically, and miscellaneous material, arranged alphabetically by name of individual, organization, topic, or type of material.
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BOX 415	1977-1982, undated (2 folders) Writings By Tuve 1925-1968 (6 folders)
BOX 416	1970-1982, undated (3 folders) By others 1952-1975 (5 folders)
BOX 417	1976-1981, undated (7 folders) Miscellany Address book, undated American Geophysical Union, 1972-1976 Applied Physics Laboratory, Johns Hopkins University, Silver Spring, Md., 1946-1982 Awards, 1945-1980, undated Biographical material, 1933-1982 Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C. Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, 1932-1978, undated (2 folders) General, 1948-1964 Comly, Lucy Winifred Tuve (daughter), 1945-1959 Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C., 1946-1981 Marriage certificate (photocopy), 1927 Miscellaneous material, 1949-1977, undated
BOX 418	National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C., 1971-1976 (6 folders) Obituaries, circa 1935-1980 Photographs Buildings, exterior, 1920-1923, undated
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1996 Addition, 1901-1982

Container

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	Other individuals, 1922-1957
	Tuve family
	Family members, 1910-1951, undated
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	Group shots
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	Portraits, 1923-1956
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	Demonstrations of electronic equipment, 1934
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	(2 folders)
	Retirement, 1966
	Ronne Antarctic Research Expedition, 1946-1953
	Tuve, Anthony G., 1904-1968
	Tuve, George Lewis, 1961-1980
	Tuve, Richard Larsen, 1961
	Tuve, Rosamund, 1951-1961
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BOX 421-434	2019 Addition, 1952-1973
	Correspondence, notes, meeting minutes, reports, and printed matter created and/or collected by Tuve during his time as director of the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution.
	Arranged alphabetically by topic or material type.
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BOX 421	Correspondence, 1964-1965
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BOX 421	"Year in Review," 1964
BOX 421	Carnegie Institution of Washington, Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Washington, D.C.
BOX 421	Administrative notes, 1964-1965
BOX 421	Annual report, 1964-1965
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2019 Addition, 1952-1973

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BOX 422	Budget and funds, 1964-1965
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BOX 422	Committee on Scientific and Technical Communication
BOX 422	1965-1966 Mar. (4 Folders)
BOX 423	1966 Mar.-Sept. (9 folders)
BOX 424	1966 Sept.-Dec. (3 folders)
BOX 424	Correspondence, 1955-1972 (4 folders)
BOX 425	Inter-American Ad-Hoc Science Advisory Board, 1966 (2 folders)
BOX 425	Johns Hopkins University, Applied Physics Laboratory, Silver Spring, Md., 1964-1965
BOX 425	Latin America Science Board
BOX 425	1963 (1 folder)
BOX 426	1963 (7 folders)
BOX 427	1963-1964 (6 folders)
BOX 428	1964-1965 (8 folders)
BOX 429	1965 (3 folders)
BOX 429	Long delay, 1952-1953
BOX 429	Miscellany, 1953-1974 (2 folders)
BOX 429	National Academy of Sciences, 1965-1972 (2 folders)
BOX 430	National Science Foundation, 1960-1965
BOX 430	Notes, 1960-1964
BOX 430	Professional associations, 1964-1969 (2 folders)
BOX 430	Reports, 1957, 1964
BOX 430	Sections
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2019 Addition, 1952-1973

Container	Contents
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BOX 431	Arizona and New Mexico trip, 1954
BOX 431	Australia, Ron Green, 1965
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BOX 431	South America
BOX 431	Optical observatory, 1958-1960
BOX 431	Optical observatory (Chile), 1957-1959 (2 folders)
BOX 432	Science development, 1959-1959
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BOX 432	Correspondence
BOX 432	1955-1959 (6 folders)
BOX 433	1959-1961 (5 folders)
BOX 433	Notes
BOX 433	1957-1959 (2 folders)
BOX 434	1959-1961 (1 folder)
BOX 434	Trip to Asia, Africa, and Australia, 1956
BOX 434	University "problems," 1964-1965
BOX 434	U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, 1964-1965
BOX 434	U.S. Coast and Geodetic Study, 1964-1965 (3 folders)
BOX 434	U.S. Government, 1964-1965
BOX CL 1	Classified, 1941 Report removed from the Office of Scientific Research and Development subseries within the Administrative File. Organized and described according to the series, box, and folder from which the item was removed.
BOX CL 1	Uranium fissions, report submitted by Enrico Fermi, 1941 (Container 66)